



# Education Matters

Monthly Newsletter of the Gila County School Superintendent's Office

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[www.gilacountyesa.org](http://www.gilacountyesa.org)

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## Upcoming Events

February 19, 2015

Gila County Spelling Bee  
Payson HS Auditorium

March 5, 2015

Gila County Regional Science Fair  
Bullion Plaza Museum,  
Miami

March 26, 2015

Southern Gila County Water Festival  
Bullion Plaza (tentative),  
Miami

## A new year, two new locations

The 2014-15 school year is in full swing and Gila County students have already been exposed to a variety of educational opportunities across the county. From STEMPaths to STEMfests, from water festivals to college and career fairs, a kaleidoscope of efforts are underway to expand horizons, extend knowledge, and open doors for Gila County's students.



In this first newsletter of the new school year, we would like to share some of these success stories with you. We are pleased to see our collaborative efforts and partnerships continue to grow and strengthen, thereby increasing the impact on education in Gila County. We would be pleased to share your school/district news and successes in future newsletters! Please contact Holly Sow at [hsow@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:hsow@gilacountyaz.gov) to submit your stories, information and – of course – photos for publication!

We would like to inform you of our new office location in Payson. The Gila County Schools Office is now located at 1100 N. Beeline Highway, Ste. G. The telephone and fax numbers have remained the same (see side bar). Our office in Globe will also soon be moving – upstairs! Within the next month, the Gila County Schools Office in Globe will be relocated to the first floor of the Gila County courthouse. Telephone, fax and contact numbers will remain the same as those currently in use. The County Schools Office also has a new online address. We can now be found at [www.gilacountyesa.org](http://www.gilacountyesa.org).

We encourage you to be in touch – please let us know how we can support your efforts!

Sincerely,

*Linda O'Dell*

## Gila County awarded MSP science grant - Control teachers needed

The Gila County Education Service Agency (GCESA) is pleased to announce it is in the final approval stages of securing a federal Mathematics & Science Partnership (MSP) grant, funded through the Arizona Department of Education. This project will provide professional development training in science for 80 Gila County teachers of grades K-8 who have expressed interest in participating. GCESA will partner with the Center for

April 25, 2015

STEMFest - Globe/Miami  
Bullion Plaza, Miami

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## Archives

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[www.gilacountyesa.org](http://www.gilacountyesa.org).

Science Teaching and Learning at Northern Arizona University to conduct the 'Energy' and 'Organisms' courses of the *Making Sense of Science* curriculum developed by WestEd. Worth more than \$626,000, this project will include teachers from districts throughout Gila County, who will participate in 106 hours of training beginning in April, 2015. We are currently seeking eighty (80) K-8 teachers to participate as control subjects as part of the project evaluation. A stipend of \$250 will be provided; contact Gail Gorry at [ggorry@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:ggorry@gilacountyaz.gov) or (928) 472-5373 for further information.

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## Gila County high school students attend college and career fairs

More than 1,000 high school students in Gila County recently had the opportunity to meet with representatives from colleges, trade schools, service agencies and potential employers at the annual Gila County College and Career Fairs. Every year, the Gila County Schools Office sponsors two fairs, the Northern Gila County College and Career Fair in Payson and the Southern Gila County College and Career Fair in Globe/Miami. Each event featured more than 40 representatives who were onsite to talk to students about post-secondary education opportunities, student services and scholarships, and career exploration.



High schools that participated included: Payson, Globe, Miami, San Carlos, Hayden-Winkelman, Young, Payson Center for Success, and the Globe Education Center. Thank you to the staff of Payson High School and Miami High School for accommodating the two fairs this year!

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## Payson STEMfest attracts more than 450 visitors

The second annual Payson STEMfest was held under beautiful blue skies on Saturday, Oct. 4 at Rumsey Park. This year's festival featured 37 groups exhibiting everything from high-tech communications to animal diversity. Payson High school students were well represented with 10 booths. (Pictured right: Gila County School Superintendent Linda O'Dell (far left) and Payson Unified School District Superintendent Greg Wyman (far right) observe PHS students perform a chemistry experiment.) The Payson Explorers, a youth program of the Gila County Sheriff's Office, and the PHS National Honor Society donated time and manpower to help with the setup and takedown of the festival.



"The success of the Payson STEMfest is due to the collaborative efforts of a large group of people who committed their time and talent to bringing this event to life," stated Linda O'Dell, Gila County School Superintendent. "I am deeply grateful to our

partners and exhibitors for their contributions and support, including the Town of Payson, the Payson Unified School District, the Payson Police and Fire Departments, the Gila County Sheriff's Office, local businesses, and the dozens of individuals, including students, whose combined efforts created a memorable experience for all of our visitors!"

STEMFest is a free community event focused on bringing kids of all ages face-to-face with the "magic" of science, technology, engineering and math, and giving them the opportunity to discover just how fun and relevant these fields are.

The southern Gila County STEMfest will be held at Bullion Plaza Museum in Miami in the spring. It is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 25. For more information on how to get involved, please visit our website at [www.gilacountyesa.org](http://www.gilacountyesa.org) or contact Holly Sow at [hsow@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:hsow@gilacountyaz.gov).

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## STEMPaths panelists provide perspective

The second annual STEMPaths Orientation was held at Miami Jr/Sr High School and High Desert Middle School on Sept. 23, 2014. Students in grades 7-12 heard from a panel of STEM professionals about the importance of STEM knowledge and a good education for successful employment. STEMPaths is a collaborative effort between the Gila County School Superintendent's



Office, local school districts and Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc. to increase student interest in the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math). This year's panelists were (ret.) USMC Capt. Jimmy Lopez, software engineer/program analyst; Lisa Diosdado, Radiology Director at Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center; Linda Gross, Publisher of the Globe-Miami Times; David Moss, CTO of People Power; Richard Reitz, Globe District Ranger-US Forest Service; Roger Laija, Plant Manager at Freeport-McMoRan; SSgt. Mitchell Thewes, US Army; Sgt. Gabe Valenzuela, Deputy Jason Fajardo, Lt. Christine Duarte, Sgt. Hom, Detention Officer Davies, Detention Officer Yerkovich and Detention Officer Osborne of the Gila County Sheriff's Office.

Each panelist spoke about his/her profession, including educational requirements, how STEM subjects are integrated into their daily tasks, salary range and job benefits, as well as the importance of soft skills and work ethic.

In the spring, the STEMPaths Conference will give students a more rigorous encounter with STEM professionals. Students will register to participate in the conference portion and will have the opportunity to select three sessions – from a total of six – to attend.

Thank you to Miami Jr/Sr High School and High Desert Middle School for accommodating these presentations.

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## GHS Robotics Club reaches out to local youth

This past summer, the GHS Tiger Robotics Team and the Globe Public Library partnered to promote STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education for local youth. After such a positive experience collaborating to inspire younger students in these subjects, both entities were enthusiastic about continuing the partnership to benefit local youth through the “Rockets to the Rescue!” project. The “Rockets to the Rescue!” project was developed by the University of Arizona and designated the 2014 4-H National Youth Science Day experiment.



The Globe Public Library has agreed to provide their facilities to the GHS Tiger Robotics Team to conduct two-hour club sessions every Friday morning with younger students. Students will be building rockets from the contents of the 4-H “Rockets to the Rescue!” kit while learning about basic aerodynamics and engineering. Students will also research and develop ideas related to how the rockets could be used to deliver food and supplies to populations affected by natural disasters.

Ultimately, the GHS Tiger Robotics Team would like to introduce the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Club program into the regional elementary and middle schools by next year. The “Rocket Club” currently meeting at the library on Fridays will serve as a means to acquaint students with robotics at an entry level and will hopefully become the gateway to initiate one or more of the other FIRST divisions: Jr. FIRST Lego League (K-3), FIRST Lego League (4-8), and FIRST Tech Challenge (7-12).

The “Rockets to the Rescue!” project is open to all students in grades K-8 and is slated to begin Nov. 7. Visit [www.globeschools.org](http://www.globeschools.org), [www.globeaz.gov/departments/library](http://www.globeaz.gov/departments/library), or check the local newspapers for more information.

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## Read on Arizona Project offers free access to digital library through December

Thanks to a collaborative of community partners, Globe/Miami and the Payson Area have been designated Read On Communities and have committed to addressing the challenges of improving reading achievement among our local school children. The Read On network is a dynamic group of education, faith-based, and business leaders dedicated to the mission that every child is reading by third grade. As part of Read On’s efforts, students ages 3 and older have access to a library of thousands of enhanced digital books on their computers, tablets, and other devices. Books are available online anytime, anywhere a student has access to an internet connection. In addition, free downloadable apps are available for offline reading through iTunes, Google Play, and the Kindle Store. The apps allow children to download up to 20 books at a time on a device and read them offline. Other features of the library include activation of audio



and text highlighting to support reading and an embedded dictionary to help with pronunciation and definitions.

Access to the digital library has been made possible through grant funding until December 19, 2014. To sign up, go to [www.ReadOnArizona.org/myOn](http://www.ReadOnArizona.org/myOn); click on myon.com and select "Log in Now"; enter the following information: School name [Read on Arizona, Digital Library], User Name: [read], Password: [read].

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## AZ Science Teachers Assoc. Annual Conference

The Arizona Science Teachers Association's annual conference will be held Nov. 7-8, 2014 under the motor "Let's Build Science". The event will be held at the NAU North Valley Phoenix Campus (15451 N. 28<sup>th</sup> Ave) and is open to teachers, administrators, informal science educators, and STEM education leaders. Sessions offered include:

- Cultural Connections in Science
- STEM as a Sport: Getting Students Involved in STEM Competitions
- AZ STEM Toolkit for K-12 Educators
- Inquiry and Differentiation
- Give up Control! Embrace Freedom!
- Join the Board Meeting
- Preparing Secondary Science Teachers to Teach English Learners
- Supporting Novice and Experienced Teachers through Mentoring and Leadership
- All Standards, All Students: Making Science Accessible to All Students
- Concept Maps for Critical Assessment

To register, visit <https://www.azsta.org/conferences>. The Embassy Suites Phoenix North – Conference Hotel is offering special rates for ASTA attendees. Call 602-375-1777 to make a reservation and ask for "NAU ASTA Conference" rates.

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## Upcoming events!

### NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> ELECTION RESULTS

The official results of the Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> General Election will be sent out in a special *Election Results* newsletter on Tuesday, Nov. 18, pending the approval of the Gila County Board of Supervisors.

### GILA COUNTY SPELLING BEE

The Gila County Spelling Bee will be held on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2015 in the Payson High School auditorium. Schools wanting to participate in the Gila County and State Spelling Bees must enroll with the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Check with your school or district spelling bee coordinator for further details. The final deadline for schools to enroll and be eligible to participate at the county and state levels is December 14, 2014. The





winner of the Gila County Spelling Bee will advance to the state competition, which will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2015.

### **GILA COUNTY REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR**

The Gila County Regional Science Fair will be held Thursday, March 5 at Bullion Plaza Cultural Center and Museum in Miami, Ariz. The Gila County Schools Office will be inviting district science fair coordinators to one of two planning meetings in November. Similar to last year, science fair projects will be judged based on age division and subject category. The Regional Fair will highlight three age divisions: Elementary (grades 5-6), Junior (grades 7-8) and Senior (grades 9-12). Project categories are: Animal Sciences, Behavioral & Social Sciences, Cellular & Molecular Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Medicine & Health Sciences, Physics & Astronomy, and Plant Sciences. The Senior Division also features the following categories: Biochemistry, Environmental Management, Engineering: Materials & Bioengineering, and Microbiology.



First place winners in each division and category from participating schools/districts are eligible to compete in the regional fair. Winners at the regional fair are eligible to compete at the Arizona State Science and Engineering Fair in early April.

Talk to your school's science fair coordinator for more information. Student science fair project handbooks will be made available online at [www.gilacountyesa.org](http://www.gilacountyesa.org) very soon!